



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Arizona Zone
Entomology and
Pathology

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Date: December 16, 1998

Subject: Bark Beetle Mortality on the Pleasant Valley Ranger District

To: Jim Soeth, District Ranger

On December 1 Jim Mercer, Zone Silviculturist, Payson Ranger District, and I visited the Pleasant Valley Ranger District to examine an area of ponderosa pine mortality detected during our 1998 aerial detection survey. Extensive mortality was observed northeast of Young in the vicinity of Forest Roads 102, 202 and 512. I examined much of this same area in 1997 when this mortality first appeared. This letter reports our findings.

Mortality in this area appeared last year and was associated with a large area of snow broken trees from the winter of 1996-1997. Pine engraver beetles, *Ips* species, invaded this material and subsequently attacked green trees of varying sizes throughout the area. Pockets of mortality first became noticeable in summer 1997 and then enlarged and coalesced late in 1997 and some in early 1998. The good news is that Jim and I were unable to find any recent mortality, that is any mortality from the latter part of the summer or fall, 1998. Beetle populations appear to have collapsed for the time being. Mortality should subside to endemic levels until another drought or similar winter event occurs.

This whole area is very susceptible to pine bark beetles in general. Ponderosa pine predominates and stand densities are typically high. Further, entomologists in the Region have long observed that pine engraver beetles seem to cause greater mortality in areas below the Mogollon Rim such as in the Prescott area, Payson, and the Fort Apache and San Carlos Indian Reservations. In the long term, the best way to reduce mortality such as this is to reduce stocking levels through silvicultural treatment. Forest Health Protection does offer a program that provides funding to pay for thinning of ponderosa pine stands where the risk of pine bark beetle outbreak is a concern. These funds are intended to supplement your existing sources of funding such as TSI or KV. I provided Jim Mercer with some information concerning this program, where and how it can be utilized. If you have any questions concerning this letter feel free to give me a call at 520-556-2074 or send me an email note at jwilson/r3,coconino.

/s/ Jill L. Wilson

JILL L. WILSON
Entomologist

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